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ABSTRACT

Designed for students enrolled in telecourses offered by Evergreen Valley College (EVC) on an independent study basis, this guide explains the role of telecourses in the college curriculum, differences and similarities between telecourses and traditional courses, procedures for contacting instructors, and the roles of the college and the student in independent learning. The first sections offer general information on telecourses, indicating that: (1) a telecourse is a complete integrated instructional system that includes television programs, a textbook, and other course materials; (2) telecourse students differ from traditional students in that they work independently, watching the television programs and reading print materials at home with guidance from the course instructor; (3) telecourses are equivalent to traditional courses in terms of academic rigor, faculty qualifications, student requirements, and credit; (4) research has demonstrated the instructional effectiveness of telecourses; and (5) maturity and self-discipline are the marks of a successful telecourse student. After reviewing research findings on the characteristics of telecourse students, the manual explains the role of the telecourse instructor and the Independent Study Office, and reviews procedures for communicating with faculty. Finally, the guide offers practical suggestions for student success, encouraging the student to attend orientation, review course materials and the broadcast schedule, avoid interruptions, take good notes, view the program a second time, attend review sessions, and take advantage of related learning activities. (AAZC)

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A Student Guide for Independent Study Telecourses

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Evergreen Valley College

San Jose / Evergreen Community College District

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INDEPENDENT STUDY CALENDAR - FALL 1988

Sept.	10	Registration and Orientation. Adm. & Rec. 9 am - 1pm.
Sept.	19	Instructor Roll Sheet distributed—C/NC out.
Oct.	1	Last day to file for refund.
Oct.	3	C/NC lists due in Adm. & Rec.
Nov.	11-13	HOLIDAY (Veterans Day)
Nov.	29	Last day drop and receive a "W" grade.
Nov.	24-27	HOLIDAY (Thanksgiving)
Dec.	19-23	Finals—the instructor will inform the student of the exact time.
Jan.	3	Instructors' grades due in Adm. & Rec. by 8:00 pm

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

INDEPENDENT STUDY HOTLINE (24 hours)

Independent Study Office 8:00 am - 12 noon	(408) 270-6422
Instructional Services Office 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	270-6434
Recording Service--after 5:00 pm	270-6422-

INDEPENDENT STUDY OFFICE, LEARNING CENTER, L-204
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 12 noon

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES, LEARNING CENTER, L-205
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

PROVOSTS' OFFICES:

ACACIA	(408) 270-6486
ROBLE	(408) 270-6450

PREFACE

This student guide is intended to provide information on Independent Study Telecourses at Evergreen Valley College. It is important that the "telecourse student" read carefully through the student guide to learn about the role of a telecourse in the college curriculum; differences and similarities between telecourses and traditional courses; procedures for contacting instructors; role of telecourse instructors and the Independent Study office; and finally, the responsibilities of the student in a telecourse. We trust that this type of independent learning will be an exciting and rewarding one for you.

Your comments and suggestions for improving the student guide, and the information it provides, are invited and welcomed by the student.

Have a good year!

TO THE INDEPENDENT LEARNER:

Welcome to an adventure in independent study. What is independent study? Independent Study is a system of instruction designed for the student to learn outside the traditional classroom on a self-paced basis. Without the immediate presence, but under the guidance of a certificated instructor(s), the student proceeds through self-administered learning modules to achieve mastery of the course learning objectives. There are typically four types of Independent Study courses currently offered at EVC:

(1) Telecourses
(2) Text/Audio courses
(3) Nonbroadcast Video courses
(4) Mixed Media courses

The majority of independent study courses at EVC, however, are telecourses which are produced by colleges and universities experienced in educational technology and instructional design.

What is a "telecourse"?

As defined by Levine (1987), a telecourse is "a complete and integrated instructional system that generally includes television programs, a textbook, and a variety of other instructional materials designed to be used by faculty and students as the principal components of a college course".

The major difference between a telecourse and a traditionally taught course depends upon the method used to transmit the course content to the student. "Traditional students" may come to campus for direct instruction by a faculty member several times per week; "television course students" work independently, watching the television programs and reading print materials at home and/or at work, with guidance from the course instructor.

Are telecourses academically sound?

Telecourses are equivalent to traditionally taught courses in terms of academic rigor, qualified faculty, student requirements, completion of general education requirements and transfer credit.

The academic content for these telecourses are developed by advisory committees comprised of professional teachers from various colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

In addition, these professional teachers are assisted by instructional design specialists, other experts, and authorities from across the country who have lent their expertise to produce video programs which are academically sound, challenging, and technically of maximum quality. With the help of an experienced faculty person who directs and mentors the student through the learning process, students learn as well via television as they do in a traditional classroom.

Can Students Learn from Television?

Researchers like Godwin and Schramm, confirmed that "the effectiveness of television has now been demonstrated in well over 100 experiments, and several hundred separate comparisons, performed in many parts of the world".

Valerie Crane, another researcher, conducted a study involving 26 colleges and universities across the United States. She found that students indicated over and over again that the telecourses they took were equivalent to on-campus courses they had taken. Furthermore, these students reported they spent the same average number of hours per week studying for television courses as they did for their traditional on-campus courses, and that their academic performance in the telecourse was at the same "usual" level as their performance in a traditional course. There was no significant differences in their grade point averages as well.

Therefore, any misconceptions that a television course is an "easy ride" is quickly dispelled once students choose to take an independent study telecourse. It's a challenging learning experience!

Who Does Take Telecourses?

Potentially, any student who meets the prerequisite can take a telecourse. However, TV study is not for everyone. Some students will probably benefit more from the regular face-to-face instruction and the constant reinforcement that a traditional on-campus course can provide. Studies indicate success of a telecourse student presupposes a higher level of maturity and more self-discipline than that of an "average" student of normal college age. (Zigerell, O'Rourke, Pohrte, 1980). "Maturity and self-discipline are the marks of a successful student who, for reasons of convenience or personal preference, studies on his/her own and needs the barest minimum of face-to-face support."

The profile of the "typical" telecourse student has remained rather constant throughout the years. The following are some important characteristics of the telecourse student (Levin, 1987, pp. 11-12):

Gender:	About two-thirds of the students were female (Brey found 68%; Crane 62%).
Age:	Telecourse students tended to be older than traditional college students. Fewer than 25% were of the traditional college age, 18- to 22-years-old. About half were over 35.
Marital Status:	Brey found that slightly more than half the students were currently married and had at least one dependent.
Employment:	Most were working at the same time they were taking telecourses. Crane found that 75% were working full-time or part-time. Brey found about 80% were employed.

Previous Educational Experience:	About two-thirds of the students in any given telecourse class were taking their first telecourse; 20% were new students for the college; 15% had not had any formal education for six years or more.
Matriculation:	About three-quarters of telecourse students were matriculating for a degree.
Ethnicity:	About 14% of telecourse enrollees were ethnic minorities, which almost parallels the proportion of minority students in the general college population.

What these studies show is that the typical telecourse student is busy, committed to furthering his/her education, and "is bringing to the college a good deal more life experience than the traditional 18- to 20-year-old college student" (Levin, 1987:).

What is the Role of the Faculty?

The role of the telecourse instructor is to guide and mentor the student through the telecourse. While in a traditionally taught class an instructor may focus on the preparation and delivery of lectures, a telecourse instructor is more likely to focus on communicating with the "distant learner" (the student) in a more personal manner that is tutorial in its approach.

The telecourse meetings involve discussions and review of materials presented through the television programs and assigned readings. A telecourse instructor will generally depend to a greater degree upon communication with students by telephone or mail than they do by class meetings, which are optional, in a telecourse. Nevertheless, the responsibilities of a telecourse instructor are similar to those of a traditional instructor in that they:

- review the course materials, including the telecourse programs
- select and develop student assignments
- adapt the course material to local needs if necessary
- monitor student progress
- communicate with students through mail, phone, and class meetings
- prepare and conduct review sessions (class meetings)
- prepare and evaluate assignments and examinations

Communicating with the Telecourse Faculty

The instructor will be available on campus to confer with students by phone or in person during designated office hours. The instructor's office hour(s), office location, and telephone number, should be indicated in the orientation handout and course syllabus. The instructor may also indicate a phone number where students may leave messages, such as the Independent Study HOTLINE and/or the Provosts' offices. (See Important Information, page 2).

In short, students can be more effective in transmitting and receiving messages from faculty if they follow this basic telephone procedure:

FIRST: Try to contact the instructor directly during regular office hours (office hours and times should be in the course syllabus).

SECOND: If the instructor is not in the office, call the Independent Study HOTLINE and leave message (see page 2).

When contacting the Independent Study HOTLINE, please be specific--and to the point--when relaying your message. Follow these simple rules:

1. Give your full name.
2. Title of course, and name of the instructor.
3. Time you called (if answering recorder is on).
4. Phone number where you can be reached by instructor at specific times.

What is the Role of the Independent Study Office?

All telecourses are coordinated through the Independent Study Office. The Independent Study Office collects and files all of the instructors' materials (i.e. course outlines, review and test schedules, study guides, bibliographies, broadcast schedules, and other instructor handouts). If the student misses the orientation and/or review sessions, go to the Independent Study Office for copies of the instructor's handouts. The instructor will also make arrangements for make-up tests (when appropriate) through the Independent Study Office.

Moreover, Independent Study assists in developing and implementing procedures for student evaluation; prepares broadcast schedules for independent study courses, and provides secretarial assistance for the faculty.

The INDEPENDENT STUDY OFFICE is located inside the EVC LIBRARY in L-204 and L-205. Office hours for morning and afternoon are as follows:

Mornings

INDEPENDENT STUDY, L-204 Telephone (408) 270-6422 Contact Person: Lily Kung	Monday - Friday	8:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Afternoons

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES, L-205 Telephone (408) 270-6434 Contact Person: Lois Lease	Monday - Friday	1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

24-Hour Recording Service

INDEPENDENT STUDY HOTLINE	(408) 270-6422

What is the Responsibility of the Student?

The independent study student should be a "self-directed" person. He/she must be mature, disciplined, and highly motivated enough to work independently with only a minimum of face-to-face support from faculty and interaction with other students. Because a student in independent study is involved in a type of "distance learning", this student must assume full responsibility for organizing a highly personalized study plan, and adhering strictly to that plan, to ensure individual efficiency and successful learning in the telecourse.

In summary, successful telecourse students are highly disciplined students. They will consistently follow many of the suggestions below:

Who's Who/What's What: 1. First rule : Learn your instructor's name and the name of the course! You'll only be meeting with your instructor four to six times during the semester.

Attend Orientation: 2. Attend orientation sessions (9/10/88). Here you'll get to meet and develop initial contact with the instructor, as well as other students, and receive the course materials early on for immediate review. The instructor may share with the class a particular perspective or vantage point in relation to the telecourse. Quite possibly, these may carry over into review sessions, tests, and out-of-class assignments. The orientation gives you a "feel" for the course and the approach to the materials by the telecourse instructor.

Review Course Materials: 3. Review the course materials (i.e. syllabus, broadcast schedule, handouts) very carefully; take special note of instructor's office hours and phone number/extension. Also, be aware of "important dates", review sessions for tests, test dates, due dates for out-of-class assignments, and other dates listed. KNOW YOUR SCHEDULES.

Review Broadcast Schedule: 4. Review carefully the broadcast schedule for the telecourse. Try to establish a set pattern for watching the video tape. Be consistent. Copies of all video tape programs will be available at the Media Circulation Desk in the Learning Center. However, if at all possible, try to organize yourself to watch the telecourse program first at home during the scheduled broadcast. A good rule is to use the video tape copies at the Media Circulation Desk primarily for the purposes of review or if you could not catch the television program(s) during the scheduled times and dates.

If you are "up to program schedule", you will minimize the problem of "telecourse cramming"--the worst sort of cramming! This would entail the student not only catching up with the number of television programs missed, but also with the readings and course assignments corresponding to these programs. Discipline yourself and closely adhere to your broadcast schedule.

Review Textbook and Study Guide:

5. You may want to scan or do a preliminary reading of the assigned chapters in the textbook before you view each telecourse program. Moreover, examine the study guide materials, key concepts, discussion questions, topic areas. In most instances, study guides will include a short pre-test for every television program. You may want to take the pre-test before the program airs, then take the test again (as a post-test) after the program. Evaluate the results--how did you do? Adjust and incorporate results into your study plan as necessary.

Avoid Interruptions/Take Good Notes:

6. When viewing the telecourse program, try to avoid distractions and interruptions . It helps if you view these programs alone or with a study partner. The student should be warned that he/she should not treat these telecourse programs as "leisurely viewing". Sit in a semi-comfortable position; have writing materials ready for note taking. Take good notes. You may want to have textbook and study guide materials handy for reference. Your telecourse instructor may offer additional advice on how to best approach the television programs and study sessions.

Second Viewings:

7. Time permitting, you may want to consider a second viewing of the television program when aired again on the appropriate channel, or you can come to the college and check out the videotape from the Media Circulation Desk in the Learning Center. No videotapes are to be taken off campus. The student must view all the videotapes in the Learning Center.

Read Assigned Materials Thoroughly:

8. Read the chapters and other assigned readings thoroughly and underline the major points. Take notes and prepare a study outline as necessary; perhaps develop a vocabulary list for each television program and the assigned readings. Look for the consistency and integration between the telecourse and textbook content (i.e. key concepts,

principles, factual information). Your telecourse instructor may be of great assistance here. Establish a regular study schedule. Be very clear about the learning objectives of each telecourse program. Moreover, if your telecourse requires out-of-class work and writing assignments, in addition to tests, start on these tasks immediately.

Attend Review Sessions:

9. Utilize review services as much as possible. Several studies on the success of the telecourse student indicate a strong correlation between consistent attendance at review sessions, particularly for tests, and student achievement. These studies concluded that "consistent attenders" were more likely to succeed in a telecourse than those students who attended sporadically or not at all. On the average, a telecourse instructor will hold 4-6 review sessions throughout the semester, normally on Saturdays. While all review sessions are optional, students are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions. Telecourse instructors work hard to prepare for these meetings and do an excellent job of synthesizing ("pulling together") the material for the student.

Take Advantage of Other Learning activities:

10. Instructors may choose to arrange other types of scheduled activities to enhance student learning. Examples of activities could be invitations to hear guest speakers, panel discussions, book talks, showing of a film, as well as participation in a conference or workshop. Again, while student attendance at such events are optional, students are strongly encouraged to attend as time may permit.

Summary/Conclusion

The intent of this Student Guide is to inform the student about the concept of independent study, and telecourses in particular. Television course students "work independently, watching the television programs and reading print materials at home and/or at work, with guidance from the course instructor". However, telecourses are equivalent to traditionally taught courses in terms of academic rigor, qualified faculty, and requirements for graduation and transfer credit.

Telecourses are not for every student. Telecourse students must be highly disciplined, mature individuals who take responsibility for their own learning. The student role in a telecourse involves (1) meeting the instructor and learning the course objectives; (2) attending orientations; (3) reviewing telecourse materials and broadcast schedule; (4) reviewing textbook and study guide; (5) avoiding interruptions and distractions when viewing the television

programs; (6) taking good notes from the television and the textbook materials; (7) taking advantage of second viewings of a television program(s); (8) reading assigned chapters thoroughly, outlining major points, and checking for consistency between textbook and telecourse content; (9) attending review sessions for tests and other important assignments; and (10) taking advantage, as time permits, of other learning activities recommended by the instructor.

By providing television courses that are academically sound, and outstanding teacher/mentors to guide students, Independent Study serves to accelerate a student's progress toward a degree and transfer to a four-year college, or help students fulfill general education requirements.

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